

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 DODE-00 PRS-01 IO-03 L-02 EUR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5057

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 13389

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MARR, MOPS, CA, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: MR IV SITREP FOR JULY 23, 1973

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON JULY 23 INFO USDAO SAIGON USSAG
NAKHON PHANOM REPEATED FOR YOURINFO

QUOTE

CAN THO 592

SUMMARY: MR IV REPORTED ONLY LIGHT MILITARY ACTIVITY
ACROSS THE DELTA. JULY 22. BAC LIEU REPORTS DIMINISHED FIGHTING
SINCE CEASEFIRE II. THE 9TH ARVN DIVISION REVEALS HEAVY
CASUALTIES SUFFERED SINCE CEASEFIRE I. ELEVEN OUTSIDE
BATTALIONS ARE NOW OPERATING IN CHUONG THIEN. A HAO HOA
LEADER WAS ASSASSINATED BY DISSIDENT MEMBERS OF THE SECT.
A NEW INDONESIAN CHIEF OF DELEGATION IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE
IN REGION VII TODAY, AS THE CANADIANS ASSEMBLE FOR DEPARTURE.
FIGHTING HAS DECLINED IN VINH BINH DUE TO TACIT LOCAL
TRUCES, RESULTING IN AN EROSION OF GVN SECURITY. END SUMMARY.

1. SECURITY SITUATION: (A) MR IV REPORTED 22 ALLEGED
VC CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS JULY 22, INCLUDING ONE GROUND ATTACK,
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15 ATTACKS BY FIRE, THREE HARASSMENTS, AND THREE TERRORIST
ACTS. RVNAF SUFFERED 13 KILLED AND 48 WOUNDED. THE VC/NVA
LOST 62 KILLED AND ONE CAPTURED. FOR THE WEEK OF JULY
16-22, MR IV CHARGED THE VC/NVA WITH 182 CEASE-

FIRE VIOLATIONS, COMPARED WITH 149 THE PREVIOUS WEEK. RVNAF ADMITTED 146 KILLED, 597 WOUNDED, AND 21 MISSING DURING THE WEEK. THEY CLAIMED 532 VC/NVA KILLED AND 8 CAPTURED.

(B) BAC LIEU MILITARY ACTIVITY HAS DECLINED SINCE CEASEFIRE II. TOTAL INCIDENTS AVERAGED ABOUT 24 PER WEEK IN JUNE AND ONLY 16 PER WEEK DURING THE FIRST HALF OF JULY. OF THE JULY INCIDENTS, ABOUT ONE IN FOUR IS CLASSIFIED AS VC-INITIATED. THE GVN CONTINUES THE HEAVY USE OF ARTILLERY FOR PURPOSES OF HARASSMENT AND INTERDICTION, ALTHOUGH SUCH FIRE MUST BE APPROVED AT SECTOR LEVEL. IN THE FIRST HALF OF JULY, BAC LIEU ARTILLERY FIRED OFF AN AVERAGE OF 380 497, \$ 034 233, DOWN ONLY SLIGHTLY FROM JUNE'S WEEKLY AVERAGE OF 408 ROUNDS.

(C) THE 9TH ARVN DIVISION CHIEF OF STAFF RECENTLY GAVE THE AMERICAN CONSUL A RENDERING OF DIVISION CASUALTIES SINCE CEASEFIRE I. THE DIVISION, WITH A NORMAL COMPLEMENT OF 5-6000 MEN, SUFFERED ALMOST 3000 CASUALTIES IN ABOUT SEVEN MONTHS. THE HIGHEST LOSSES WERE INFLICTED IN APRIL DURING THE FIERCE FIGHTING AROUND HONG NGU, KIEN PHONG PROVINCE. CASUALTIES APPEAR TO HAVE DROPPED OFF SOMEWHAT DURING CEASEFIRE II. A MONTHLY ACCOUNTING FOLLOWS:

FEBRUARY	124 KIA	549 WIA
MARCH	96 KIA	328 WIA
APRIL	151 KIA	771 WIA
MAY	43 KIA	213 WIA
JUNE	118 KIA	399 WIA
JULY 1-17	24 KIA	150 WIA
TOTAL	556 KIA	2410 WIA

(D) WITH THE RECENT ARRIVAL OF ANOTHER RF BATTALION FROM AN GIANG, THERE ARE NOW ELEVEN OUTSIDE RF BATTALIONS WITH ABOUT 3700 MEN OPERATING IN CHUONG THIEN. ANOTHER BATTALION CONFIDENTIAL

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FROM VINH LONG IS EXPECTED SOON. THESE RF UNITS HAVE REINFORCED FIVE LOCAL RF BATTALIONS AND FIVE CHUONG THIEN INDEPENDENT RF COMPANIES. THEY SUPPLEMENT THE LARGE NUMBER OF CHUONG THIEN-BASED ARVN UNITS FROM THE 9TH AND 21ST DIVISIONS, 41ST RANGER GROUP AND 9TH ARMORED CAVALRY SQUADRON. (CAN THO 0470 AND 0591). THE OUTSIDE RF BATTALIONS CURRENTLY IN CHUONG THIEN INCLUDE THE 437, 438, 439, AND 457 FROM AN GIANG, THE 424, 494, AND 448 FROM CHAU DOC, THE 428 AND 477 FROM PHONG DINH, AND 443 AND 444 FROM VINH LONG.

(E) TWO ASSASSINS IN HOA HAO VILLAGE, CHAU DOC, JULY 20 MURDERED HO THAI NGAN, FIRST DEPUTY OF THE CENTRAL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HOA HAO BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION (LUONG TRONG TUONG FACTION), ACCORDING TO THE CHAU DOC VICE CONSUL, THE ASSASSINS WERE MEMBERS OF LUC LUONG NGHIA QUANG CACH MANG MIEN TAY ("POPULAR SOUTHERN REVOLUTIONARY FORCE"), A GROUP OF BANDITS AND EXTORTIONISTS WHO OPERATE ON THE FRINGES OF HOA HAO VILLAGE. THE GANG IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE BLACK SAIL, GOLDEN CRAB, BLOODY HAND, AND THE WESTERN REGION ANTI-COMMUNIST FORCE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT VIETNAMESE NEWS REPORTS BLAMED THE VC FOR NGAN'S ASSASSINATION, BUT WE BELIEVE IT TO BE THE RESULT OF A HOA HAO INTRAMURAL SQUABBLE.

2. ICCS: THE REGION VII CHIEF OF THE INDONESIAN DELEGATION TOLD A VICE CONSUL JULY 22 THAT HIS DUCESSOR, LTC A. ISMULYONO IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN CAN THO JULY 23. LTC ISMULYONO IS A CAREER INFANTRY OFFICER AND A GRADUATE OF RANGER AND COMMANDO SCHOOLS. HE COMES TO VIET NAM FROM A POSITION IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, JAKARTA. MEANWHILE, THE REGION VII CANADIANS ARRIVE IN CAN THO JULY 23 FROM THE TEAM SITES. AFTER A FINAL ROUND OF LEAVETAKING, THEY WILL DEPART CAN THO FOR SAIGON JULY 26.

3. SELECTED PROVINCE COMMENT: FIGHTING AND CASUALTIES HAVE DECLINED IN VINH BINH PROVINCE SINCE CEASEFIRE II, BUT NOT BECAUSE OF IMPROVED GVN SECURITY. DESPITE MR IV COMMANDER MGEN NGUYEN VINH NGHI'S ORDER FORBIDDING CONTACTS BETWEEN VC AND GVN COMMANDERS BELOW THE DIVISION LEVEL, THERE APPEARS TO BE AN INCREASED ACCOMMODATION AMONG VINH CONFIDENTIAL

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BINH LOCAL FORCES BASED UPON MUTUAL RESTRAINT. THESE TACIT UNDERSTANDINGS ARE OFTEN REACHED THROUGH PF FAMILIES WHICH ARE HEAVILY PROPAGANDIZED BY THE VC. AN EXAMPLE OF SUCH FRIENDLY PERSUASION MAY BE SEEN IN A JULY 11 INCIDENT IN DAI PHUC VILLAGE, KANG LONG DISTRICT. THE VC GAVE AN ALL NIGHT PARTY AND INVITED 40 TO 50 PEOPLE FROM SURROUNDING VILLAGES, INCLUDING SOME LOCAL PF. THE NEXT MORNING, AFTER SOME HEAVY PROPAGANDA ON THE THEME "THE WAR IS OVER AND WE SHOULD ALL BE FRIENDS" THE VC GAVE THE VILLAGERS GIFTS AND ESCORTED THEM HOME GVN PACIFICATION RESEARCH TEAMS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT SUCH CONTACTS ARE OFTEN FOLLOWED BY A DECLINE IN GVN ACTIVITY AND SECURITY. IN TRA CU AND CAU NGANG DISTRICTS, ONCE CONSIDERED LARGELY PACIFIED, HAMLET CHIEFS RARELY SLEEP IN THEIR HAMLETS AND PF SELDOM VENTURE OUT OF THEIR OUTPOSTS ON PATROL. IN RACH CAY SU OUTPOST, HIEP MY VILLAGE, CAU NGANG, PF COMMANDERS AGREED TO ALLOW THE VC TO TAX AND PROPAGANDIZE FREELY, SO LONG AS THEY DID NOT ATTACK OR BLOCKADE THE OUTPOST. WHEN A NEW PF COMMANDER FAILED TO FOLLOW HIS PREDECESSOR'S EXAMPLE, THE VC ATTACKED THE POST. THESE EXAMPLES SUGGEST THAT CEASEFIRE II MAY BE MAKING HEADWAY IN VINH BINH, BUT NOT TO GVN ADVANTAGE. SIGNED LEHMANN

UNQUOTE MARTIN

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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